

## History of Preterm Delivery

**Definition/  
cut-off value**

Birth of an infant at <37 weeks gestation

Pregnant Women: Any history of preterm delivery

Breastfeeding/Non-Breastfeeding: Most recent pregnancy.

**Participant  
category and  
priority level**
**Category**
**Priority**

Pregnant Women

I

Breastfeeding Women

I

Non-Breastfeeding Women

III

**Justification**

Preterm birth causes at least 75% of neonatal deaths not due to congenital malformations (1). In most cases of preterm labor, the cause is unknown. Epidemiologic studies have consistently reported low socioeconomic status, nonwhite race, maternal age of <18 years or >40 years, and low prepregnancy weight as risk factors. A history of one previous preterm birth is associated with a recurrent risk of 17-37% (2, 3); the risk increases with the number of prior preterm births and decreases with the number of term deliveries.

**Clarifications/  
Guidelines**

Before assigning this risk code, be sure pregnancy outcome history is documented on the WIC-45, WIC-40, or WIC-41, whichever is appropriate.

Preterm birth refers to a live birth, but because 75% of neonatal deaths are the result of a preterm birth this risk code may also be used in combination with risk code 321 – History of Spontaneous Abortion, Fetal or Neonatal Loss. NOTE: in order to use these risk codes in combination, a live birth needs to precede the neonatal death. Refer to risk code 321 for definitions.

**References**

1. Preterm Labor; ACOG Technical Bulletin; No. 206; June 1995.
2. Hoffman HJ, Bakketeig LS.: Risk factors associated with the occurrence of preterm birth; Clin Obstet Gynecol; 1984; 27:539-522.
3. Keirse MJNC, Rush RW, Anderson AB, Turnbull AC: Risk of preterm delivery in patients with a previous preterm delivery and/or abortion; Br J Obstet Gynecol; 1978; 85:81-85.